

This Letter

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DIRECTIVE TO IMPROVE THE PERSONNEL SYSTEM
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND THE UNIFIED
FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES

I

General Explanation

This is a directive to improve the personnel systems and personnel management of the Departmental and Foreign Services. The course of action outlined below stems from the findings and recommendations of the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Personnel. This course of action is designed to improve personnel management primarily by administrative adjustments. It is consistent with the objectives advocated by the Advisory Committee but does not at this time go as far as the program recommended by the Committee.

II

Principal Objectives and Basic Approach

The principal objectives of this directive are to:

1. Obtain, develop, and maintain an experienced and versatile career service capable of meeting the present and future needs of the Department and the Foreign Service of the United States in the conduct of foreign affairs and to provide means for quickly supplementing this staff whenever conditions require temporary or permanent expansion of personnel.
2. Make maximum use of the skills and abilities of Departmental and Foreign Service personnel and broaden the range of their usefulness through training and developmental programs.
3. Eliminate inequities in the treatment of certain categories of Foreign Service employees.
4. Increase through voluntary means the flexible use of domestic and Foreign Service personnel interchangeably between overseas and domestic assignments, including a greater interchange with other government agencies concerned with foreign affairs and increased utilization in the Foreign Service of qualified persons not now in the Government by means of lateral appointment to the Foreign Service Reserve.
5. Establish and maintain uniformly high standards in all phases of personnel management.

These objectives should be accomplished basically by administrative adjustments under the present Foreign Service Act of 1946 and in the Departmental personnel system, supplemented by legislative measures. The administration of the Foreign Service Act of 1946 should be adjusted so as to supply a substantially increased number of trained and experienced officers for present and future needs of the Government in the conduct of foreign affairs. Concurrently, the administration of the Departmental personnel system should give particular emphasis to developing a larger staff of persons willing and qualified to serve at home and abroad.

Achievement of these objectives will provide an informed basis for possible further integration in the future of the Departmental and Foreign Services under an improved personnel career system and for utilizing this system for staffing additional civilian overseas activities of the United States Government.

III

Assignment of Responsibility

The Director of Personnel is hereby authorized and directed to develop and recommend to the Deputy Under Secretary for administration implementing instructions and drafts of legislation and to take such other action within established delegations of authority as is necessary to accomplish the action steps outlined in IV below. Policy and procedural changes affecting the Foreign Service will be submitted to the Board of the Foreign Service.

IV

Specific Improvement Steps

The steps set forth below should be taken without delay to improve and strengthen the personnel management of the Departmental and Foreign Services.

A. Estimate of Personnel Requirements

Subject to the limitations imposed by a state of national emergency of indefinite duration, the types, levels and numbers of personnel that will be required by the Department of State and the unified Foreign Service of the United States for the conduct of foreign affairs of the Government should be estimated for each of the next five years and for a longer period if practicable. This estimate should be used as a general guide in developing both short and long-range programs for recruitment, training, promotion and assignment of Departmental and Foreign Service personnel.

B. Exchange Program

The scope of the present Exchange Program should be stepped up for an indefinite period with particular reference to: (1) the inclusion on a voluntary basis of Departmental employees occupying positions in which overseas experience is essential or desirable and, (2) the inclusion on a voluntary basis of employees of other agencies in numbers adequate to meet the needs of such agencies. As a consequence, there should be an increase in the number of assignments of Foreign Service personnel to the Department and to other agencies.

The performance records of participants in this program should adequately recognize the added experience acquired by all such officers.

C. Recruitment

More vigorous and far-reaching recruitment efforts should be undertaken both for the Departmental and Foreign Services, using as a basis the projection of personnel needs referred to in item A. In recruiting persons for positions in the Department for which dual service at home and abroad is desirable, every effort shall be made to employ persons who are qualified and willing to serve abroad.

Departmental and Foreign Service recruitment activities should be closely coordinated and to the extent possible recruitment standards should be devised for types of work common to the two Services.

D. Separation of Unfit Employees

Departmental and Foreign Service employees whose records clearly indicate that, after an adequate opportunity, they are incapable of meeting performance requirements should be separated. Full use should be made of the probationary period in this connection.

E. Additional Improvements in Foreign Service Personnel Management

1. Complexion and Use of Personnel Categories

Appointments to the Foreign Service and subsequent assignments and use of personnel should be made in accordance with the following:

a. The Foreign Service Staff category should be sharply reorganized in line with the intent of the Foreign Service Act of 1946 and in accordance with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee concerning the functions of a Clerical and Technical Branch. As a consequence the Staff category should be used primarily to perform technical, technical-administrative, clerical, and other closely related functions. Both permanent and temporary appointments may be made to the Staff category as the needs of the Service require.

b. The Foreign Service Reserve category should be sharply redefined so that it is in fact the temporary appointment vehicle for supplementing the Foreign Service Officer category. In this connection the Foreign Service Act of 1946 should be amended to extend the period of service of a Reserve Officer from four years to five years. The Reserve category should be used to perform work which the Foreign Service Officer category is insufficiently staffed to handle; to carry out special projects or programs of a temporary or emergency nature; to help in the initial staffing of new or expanded programs of a continuing nature; for the present Exchange Program; and as a means of enabling other agencies to temporarily assign personnel to the Service under a positive inter-agency exchange program to be worked out with those agencies. Concurrently, the Reserve category should not be used to staff activities normally performed by the Foreign Service Staff category.

c. In keeping with the Foreign Service Act of 1946, the Foreign Service Officer category should be built to the strength necessary and used as the vehicle for staffing those executive and professional functions of a continuing nature which the Advisory Committee recommended be staffed by a Foreign Affairs Officer branch.

2. Expansion of the Foreign Service Officer Category

a. The appointment of Class 6 Foreign Service Officers should be substantially increased to support the larger corps of Foreign Service Officers.

b. Lateral entry into the Foreign Service Officer category should be substantially increased in accord with the provisions of Section 517 of the Foreign Service Act of 1946 but by the following liberalized measures:

(1) The present percentage limitations on the number of vacancies that can be filled by lateral entry should be removed for the next three years. (The number of vacancies to be established should take into account such additional needs for Foreign Service Officers as may be required by the Government generally and for which the requisite funds can be secured.)

(2) Positive efforts should be made to induce qualified Departmental and Foreign Service Reserve and Staff Personnel to compete for appointment under Section 517.

(3) For each person appointed as a Foreign Service Officer under Section 517, a corresponding increase should be made in the authorized strength of the FSO category so as to assure maintenance of adequate promotional opportunities for Foreign Service Officers presently employed.

(4) Candidates appointed as Foreign Service Officers under these provisions should meet a standard with respect to experience, performance, and other evidences of qualifications which, in the aggregate, is comparable to the average of the Foreign Service Officer class to which appointment is made.

(5) Section 413 (b) of the Foreign Service Act of 1946 should be amended to permit persons appointed as a Foreign Service Officer to receive salary at any one of the rates provided for the class to which they are appointed.

3. Curtailment of Staff Officer Appointments

There should be a gradual curtailment in the appointment of permanent Foreign Service Staff Officers for work which should be performed by Foreign Service Officers or Foreign Service Reserve Officers. This should be accomplished as rapidly as the other categories can be expanded to meet normal replacement needs; but without prejudicing compelling or emergency requirements for staffing expanded program activities of a continuing nature.

4. Examination and Selection

Assure that the methods of examination and selection of personnel for all levels and all categories are consistent with the needs of the Department and the unified Foreign Service. In filling positions in labor, agriculture, and commercial categories, the qualifications standards to be applied will be developed in consultation with the member agencies of competence.

5. Assignment

a. Improved methods should be devised for the assignment, development and utilization of personnel, including provisions for more realistic post complements and, to the extent practicable, elimination of excessively short tours of duty at any post.

b. As soon as additional qualified staff are available, increased use should be made of Foreign Service personnel in staffing special missions and programs in the foreign affairs field and delegations to international organizations.

6. Training

Present training programs and efforts should be maintained and expanded if possible, with particular reference to such fields as international security, psychological warfare, civil affairs, and intelligence.

Increased emphasis should be placed on a positive program of executive development.

7. Promotion

The present promotion system based on regular and systematic evaluation of employee qualifications should be continued and strengthened. Adequate provision should be made for meritorious promotions. Foreign Service Officers who develop occupational or area specialization should have promotional opportunities equal to those of "general officers". Executive ability should be given full recognition in selecting officers for promotion to positions of leadership and command.

8. Pay and Related Benefits

a. Salary differentials for service at hardship posts should be extended on an equal basis to all American personnel.

b. Legislation should be secured providing for an improved salary schedule and pay plan. The present separate schedules for the Foreign Service Officer and Staff categories should be integrated into a single schedule which will reflect a reduction in the number of Staff Corps classes and an increase in the number of FSO classes.

c. Legislation should be sought to place permanent Foreign Service Staff personnel under the Foreign Service Retirement and Disability System to the extent that actuarial and related studies make this feasible. Except for purposes of disability retirement, future extra retirement credit for service at unhealthful posts should be eliminated when salary differentials for service at hardship posts are extended to all American personnel.

d. The Foreign Service leave system should be reexamined and consideration should be given to adjusting present leave benefits in the case of persons assigned to the United States to correspond more closely to leave benefits currently accruing to Departmental employees.

9. Selection-Out

A selection-out process should be retained for the Foreign Service and should be used to retire from the Service those who fail to meet performance requirements and those whose usefulness has become so marginal as to unduly inhibit the advancement of more able employees.

10. Emergency Provisions

Provision should be made for the Secretary, whenever he determines an emergency to exist, to:

a. Recall any retired Foreign Service Officer to active service.

b. Make temporary promotions in all categories of personnel.

c. Extend the period of service of a Reserve Officer for an additional two years beyond the proposed five year maximum based on an extraordinary and compelling need in connection with a specific project.

d. Extend the period of service that an officer or employee of the Foreign Service may serve in the United States, not to exceed one additional year, based on an extraordinary and compelling need in connection with a specific project.

F. Additional Improvements in Departmental Service Personnel Management

1. Dual Service Positions

Positions in the Departmental Service for which overseas experience is an essential or highly desirable qualification should be identified. To the extent that it is practical to do so these positions should be filled by persons possessing this qualification.

2. Recruitment and Selection

Consistent with the difficulties imposed by the national mobilization effort and in the interest of building for the future, a maximum effort should be made to increase the employment of promising junior officers for the Departmental Service. In this connection, programs of intern training should be continued and strengthened in close coordination with entrance level requirements for the Foreign Service.

3. Promotion

Positive steps should be taken to develop an improved promotional system for the Departmental Service which will assure periodic evaluation of employee fitness for promotion.

4. Training and Career Development

a. Efforts should be made to develop further training and career development programs for the Departmental Service. Legislation should be secured to enable Departmental officers to receive training at Government expense in the same manner that Foreign Service personnel now receive training.

b. Increased emphasis should be placed on the executive development program, with particular reference to broadening the range of experience and competence of junior Departmental and Foreign Service officers through training and work assignment rotation.

5. Turnover

Efforts should be made to reduce voluntary turnover of well-qualified personnel by improved placement and full utilization of employee skills and abilities.

V

General Instructions

Appropriate officers of the Department should be kept advised of progress toward achievement of the objective of an improved personnel system.

The Director of Personnel should arrange on an informal basis to obtain advisory assistance from other departments represented on the Board of the Foreign Service and from appropriate officers of the Department as will help him implement this directive. These arrangements should be considered as supplementary to (and not in lieu of) established procedures governing the advisory functions of the Board of the Foreign Service with respect to the personnel management of the Foreign Service. Maximum participation of other interested agencies in inter-agency bodies should be encouraged.

Employees should be kept informed periodically of important developments affecting their interests.

The continuing administration of the personnel program should be adjusted to conform to directives and instructions issued to implement the policies expressed in this directive.

The planning staff in the Office of Personnel should be strengthened to the full extent that this will facilitate the adjustments called for in this directive. This staff should include representatives of Departmental personnel and of the Foreign Service and should consult with other Government agencies which rely upon the support of the Foreign Service abroad.

The limited legislation needed to accomplish the above improvements should be drafted and made ready for submission to the Congress no later than May 1, 1951.